



Show Love for the Earth with these Valentine's Day Ideas

See how sustainability can be romantic, too!

Valentine's Day is one of those holidays where wasteful consumerism encourages the purchase of throwaway gifts, plasticky balloons and decorations, glittered cards, and cheap stuffed animals. But living a sustainable, earth-friendly lifestyle doesn't mean that you have to miss out on celebrating with your loved ones. Taking a more mindful approach to the day is not only a great way to show love for the earth but also promises a more romantic, meaningful, and memorable experience.

Instead of short-lived flowers, gift a living plant

Many flowers are shipped long distances causing them to have a greater carbon footprint. A far better gift is a houseplant, or succulent — or, better yet, a landscape plant or special tree. We have several local nurseries in Mesa where you can find some great low-water using plants:

- **Our favorite shrub:** Eremophila. Look for cultivars called 'Valentine' or 'Cupid' as they bloom beautiful red tubular flowers in February each year.
- **Our favorite perennial:** Penstemon. Look for 'Firecracker' as its bright red spikes always start blooming by late February and keep blooming into early summer.
- **Our favorite tree:** Desert Willow. There are several cultivated varieties with colors from pink to magenta. This tree blooms all summer long.



All three of these plants are loved by hummingbirds and lots of other pollinators, too. Find local garden centers at the [Plant Something](#) site and learn about more plants at our [Landscape Plants for the Arizona Desert](#) site.

Buy sweets, gifts, and jewelry produced responsibly and sustainably

Instead of purchasing from large retail outlets, consider shopping from local artists and craft food vendors. You can't go wrong with:

- **Jewelry & gifts:** [The Store Artist Cooperative Gallery](#) at Mesa Arts Center is a great place to find beautiful pottery, paintings, other fun gifts, and jewelry.
- **Local and sustainably sourced food:** Check out Saturday's [Downtown Mesa Farmers Market](#), or [Main Street Harvest](#) in downtown Mesa for sustainably sourced chocolate and coffee.



Silver and sea glass heart necklace from The Store.

Learn to live Green

Gift your time, an experience, or make a memory

Give a gift of your time by making a beautiful card from recycled materials or cook a delicious meal. Planning quality time with your loved one is also a special gift. Select a restaurant that features locally sourced food. How about a day spent out in nature?

We have so many fun ideas for this one:

- **Cook a meal to express your feelings:** A delicious salad made from freshly harvested Arizona grown beets easily says “you make my heart ‘beet’ faster.” And there’s no sweeter way to say “would you ‘bee’ mine” than with some AZ honey.
- **Get outside:** Mesa has so many amazing parks, but check out [Park of the Canals](#), [Monarch Haven and Reading Sanctuary](#), and [Desert Arroyo Park](#) for romantic nature walks.
- **If you bicycle:** Buy your valentine a reusable water bottle and take them to [Desert Trails Park](#), our 35-acre bike park with different types of bike trails, picnic tables, and more.
- **Plan a downtown Mesa date night:** Downtown Mesa has so much to offer from live shows at the [Mesa Arts Center](#) and comedy clubs, to amazing museums, restaurants, breweries, taprooms (including a cidery), and some fun and eclectic vintage shops.



Learn more about [Mesa downtown restaurants, arts, and culture](#), about [Mesa Parks](#), and about local food at Local First Arizona’s [Good Food Finder](#).

Start being mindful of your purchasing while doing your part for building a sustainable community. For more ideas, visit www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability.

Learn to live Green